

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1. (Original) An apparatus for routing packets over a network, the packets comprising a first packet type and a second packet type, wherein each packet of the first packet type has a corresponding packet of the second packet type, the apparatus comprising:

(a) a transceiver configured to receive and to forward each packet;

and

(b) a processor, coupled to the transceiver, that is arranged to perform actions, including:

if the received packet is of the first packet type, forwarding the received packet to a first traffic manager that is selected based on at least a first field in the received packet;

and

if the received packet is of the second packet type, forwarding the received packet to a second traffic manager that is selected based on at least a second field in the received packet, wherein the first traffic manager is the same as the second traffic manager when the received packet of the first packet type corresponds to the received packet of the second packet type.

2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the first field of the first packet type includes a first value substantially equivalent to a second value in the second field of a corresponding packet of the second packet type.

3. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the first packet type further comprises a packet in a first direction, and the second packet type further comprises a packet in a second direction.

4. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising determining the packet type of the received packet in part by comparing a source port number with a destination port number.

5. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the first field further comprises at least one of a source IP address and a source port number, and the second field further comprises at least one of a

destination IP address and a destination port number.

6. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein forwarding the received packet based on at least the first field further comprises:

hashing the first field in the received packet to obtain a hash key; and employing the hash key to select the first traffic manager to which the received packet is forwarded.

7. (Original) The apparatus of claim 6, wherein employing the hash key to select the first traffic manager further comprises using the hash key as an index into an allocation table of traffic managers.

8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the processor is arranged to perform actions, further comprising, if the received packet is other than a TCP packet or a User Datagram Protocol (UDP) packet, forwarding the received packet to a third traffic manager that is selected using the first field and the second field in the received packet.

9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the apparatus is arranged to operate as at least one of a distributor, a router, a bridge, a firewall, and a gateway.

10. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the processor is arranged to perform actions, further comprising, if the received packet is associated with a pre-determined group characteristic, selecting the first traffic manager and the second traffic manager from a plurality of traffic managers that are partitioned into groups of traffic managers based in part on the pre-determined group characteristic.

11. (Original) The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the pre-determined group characteristic further comprises at least one of a Secure Socket Layer (SSL) packet, Domain Name System (DNS) packet, and a UDP packet.







26. (Original) The system of claim 24, wherein using in part the first field further comprises using a source IP address and a source port number in the received packet.

27. (Original) The system of claim 25, wherein using the part the second field further comprises using a destination IP address and a destination port number in the received packet.

28. (Original) The system of claim 24, wherein in part the first field further comprises:  
hashing a source IP address and a source port number in the received packet to obtain a hash key; and  
employing the hash key to select the first traffic manager to which the received packet is forwarded.

29. (Original) The system of claim 28, wherein hashing the source IP address includes employing a hash function that is configured to load balance the plurality of traffic managers.

30. (Original) The system of claim 24, wherein the distributor is arranged to perform actions, further comprising, if the received packet is associated with a pre-determined group characteristic, selecting the traffic manager and the other traffic manager from a plurality of traffic managers that are partitioned into groups of traffic managers based in part on the pre-determined group characteristic.

31. - 33. (Canceled)